2000 Annual Report

Prince Edward Island
Environmental Advisory Council

Prince Edward Island
Environmental
Advisory Council

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Honourable Chester Gillan, *Minister*
Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment
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Dear Mr. Gillan:

In accordance with the requirements of the *Environmental Protection Act*, I have the honour of presenting the Annual Report of the Environmental Advisory Council.

This report covers the period of January 01, 2000 to December 31, 2000.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna J. Giberson

Dr. Donna Giberson
Chairperson

102-06949/

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Introduction

The Environmental Advisory Council is a group of individuals appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to advise the Minister Responsible for the Environment on environmental matters. Council members do not receive financial compensation other than travel expenses. In 2000, the Council consisted of nine members during the period January through June; and 12 members from September through December.

Secretarial services for the Council are provided by staff of the Minister Responsible for the Environment.

Environmental Advisory Council Terms of Reference

Section 4(2) of the *Environmental Protection Act* sets out the Council's responsibilities. The Act provides that:

The Council shall:

(a) serve as an advisory board to the Minister Responsible for the Environment;

(b) perform such functions as may be prescribed by regulations.

The mandate for the Environmental Advisory Council as prescribed by the Act is somewhat general in order to be all encompassing. To better define the Environmental Advisory Council's mandate, the following terms of reference were approved by the Minister:

1. To advise the Minister Responsible for the Environment on matters referred to it by him or the public under the *Environmental Protection Act*.

2. To report annually to the Minister on submissions received, research conducted, investigations undertaken and recommendations made under the *Environmental Protection Act*.

3. To advise the Minister on environmental matters related to activities in relation to the Provincial Conservation Strategy.

4. To make recommendations to the Minister on conservation or environmental improvement awards.

5. To make recommendations to the Minister respecting opportunities for environmental improvement or protection programs or projects.

6. To recommend to the Minister public education projects or programs.

7. To make recommendations to the Minister respecting support for community, private and non-government programs and projects.

8. To advise the Minister on legislative proposals as they relate to environmental protection and enhancement.

9. To advise the Minister on such matters as he may direct.

10. To perform such functions as may be provided by regulations under Subsection 4(2)(b) of the Act.

General Comments

The Environmental Advisory Council had a relatively active year in 2000, with a diverse agenda and significant changes in personnel. Council began the year with nine members, but in June several members retired, having fulfilled their term. At the same time, three new members joined the Council. Later in September, two additional members were added to the ranks for a total of 12 members. In June, Council also accepted the resignation of Dr. Leon Loucks as chair. Dr. Loucks had served in this capacity for the previous two years. In the fall, Dr. Donna Giberson assumed the position of chair of the Council.

Council began the year reporting to the Honourable Mitch Murphy, Minister of the Department of Technology and Environment, however in May, the Honourable Kevin MacAdam assumed responsibility for the environment portfolio and the department was renamed the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment. Late in 2000, following Mr. MacAdam's departure from the provincial government, the Honourable Chester Gillan was appointed as Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment.

Council had 10 regular meetings during the year 2000, as well as an orientation session for new members in October. In addition, a number of special meetings of various subcommittees of Council were held.

As in the past, Council has endeavored to keep abreast of new developments and issues, and was fortunate in having knowledgeable people make presentations on some of these issues. A list of speakers and their topic of discussion is presented in the table below.

Meeting	***Guests***	***Issues Discussed***
January	BrianThompson George Trainor	Environmental Management in Department of Transportation and Public Works
March	Carl Brothers	Wind Energy/Atlantic Wind Test Site
April	Rachael Cheverie	Integrated Pest Management
May	Ron DeHaan	Environmental Farm Plans and Soil Conservation Practices
June	Environmental Awards Winners and Guests	
October	Dr. Rose Mary Garret	Agricultural Education
November	Kate MacQuarrie	Protected Areas in the Island Landscape

Brief to the PEI Pesticides Advisory Committee

In the course of the Environmental Advisory Council's discussions, the impact of pesticides on the environment and human health arise frequently. Accordingly, Council has attempted to keep abreast of developments in this area, and on occasion, takes advantage of opportunities to express its concerns on these matters.

In February of 2000, the Council made a presentation to the PEI Pesticides Advisory Committee at its annual public meeting. The contents of the presentation are included below:

A Brief to the PEI Pesticides Advisory Committee
From the PEI Environmental Advisory Council
February 9, 2000
Presented by Dr. Leon Loucks, Chair
Lorne MacNeill, Vice-Chair

Members of the Pesticides Advisory Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views to your committee. My name is Leon Loucks and I am the Chair of the Environmental Advisory Committee. With me to make this presentation is Vice-Chair Lorne MacNeill. I am a retired Professor of Chemistry, living in Charlottetown; Lorne is a Farmer from West Cape.

The Environmental Advisory Council is a group of individuals appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to advise the Minister of Technology and Environment on environmental matters. The membership is drawn from across the Island and there are currently nine members on the Council. Members receive no financial compensation other than travel expenses.

All members have special experience or background in certain matters pertaining to the environment. The impact of pesticides on the environment comes into our deliberations frequently and we take care to understand these issues as best we can.

We come before you today to express our concerns in regard to four specific topics for which your committee can be instrumental in improving environmental practices.

Curbing the Use of Extremely Hazardous Pesticides

Section 9 (5) of the *Pesticides Control Act* gives your committee the authority "to inquire into

and consider any matters concerning pesticides and report thereon to the Minister". We believe therefore that you have a responsibility to be examining the lethal concentrations of various pesticides used in PEI and recommending the suspension or limitation of those that you find to be too hazardous. Clearly the fish kills of 1999 have shown that current products in combination with current practices is not acceptable to the public.

The Action Committee on Agricultural Runoff Control recommended "reduction in pesticides used (kg/ha of active ingredient used) or pesticide risk". However, they failed to go so far as to name pesticides that should be banned in PEI or restricted in other ways. We submit that your committee has the authority, the knowledge and the responsibility to recommend to the Minister explicit actions to protect the environment from the most harmful pesticides.

The recent publication from PEI Agriculture and Forestry (AGDEX 607/99-02) provides excellent information and gives a ranking of risk that is thoughtful and defensible. The resulting risk scale results in a classification whereby five pesticides are ranked as extremely hazardous to fish for acute effects. We believe that all of these pesticides must not be used on fields from which runoff to adjacent streams is probable. Outright banning of these pesticides seems to be the appropriate action; certainly they must be banned from use near watercourses.

Effects of Fungicides on Stream Life

Fungicides are a common component of pesticides applied to crops on PEI. Yet, to our knowledge, their potential impact on the ecosystems of our streams and rivers has never been addressed. Microscopic fungi are an essential element in the aquatic food web. These microorganisms have a major role in breaking down dead leaves and other organic material introduced into streams. In the process, they greatly enhance the nutritive value of this material to detritus-feeding animals (such as insect larvae) which, in turn, provide food for other animals, including fish. Fungi in the marine environment fulfill a similar critical function.

Detrimental effects of insecticides introduced into the aquatic environment tend to be most conspicuous, because of the size of the animals affected. Yet, effects of other pesticides, such as fungicides, that can be far more subtle because of the microscopic size of their targets may in fact have the most serious, long-term consequences, because they affect the very base of the food chain's pyramid. We commend to you the reading of "The Biology of Streams and Rivers" by PS Giller and B Malmqvist in the 1998 text entitled "Biology of Habitats" with editors MJ Crawley, C Little, TRE Southwood and S Ulfstrand (Oxford University Press).

Too little is known about the effects of fungicides on the long-term health of our PEI streams.

We urge your committee to recommend the undertaking of research and studies to identify the risks and damage from fungicides.

Golf Courses and Pesticides

The rapid expansion in the golf sector of the tourist industry may have impacts on the environment. There are now some 20 golf courses each with nearly 200 acres of land and plans for new courses arise regularly; we may soon see over one per cent of the Island land mass devoted to golf. At first sight it would seem that golf courses should be highly favorable to the environment as erosion and runoff would appear to be minimal once a course is established. Furthermore, on PEI, golf courses may need to apply fewer chemicals than in warmer parts of the country. However, we have scant knowledge of the actual practice.

Golf courses are known to use fungicides, insecticides, herbicides and fertilizers. Older courses may have different application patterns than newer courses as they have not come through the rigorous environmental approval processes. Course owners are under pressure from their clients to provide high q ality greenery and freedom from pests; they may feel compelled to apply more than recommended amounts of pesticide and fertilizer.

We urge your committee to recommend a thorough study of the practices of golf courses in regard to pesticides and fertilizers. From the understanding obtained we would hope that you can recommend pesticide standards for the maintenance of golf courses in PEI.

Improving the Pesticide Certification Course

Those persons who wish to purchase and apply agricultural pesticides in PEI must successfully take a Pesticide Certification Course offered under the direction of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry. The course is of one day's duration with a two hour examination taken in the last two hours of the day. The course must be taken at least every five years to maintain standing.

Much of the course has the appropriate content and is well presented. Topics such as the federal and provincial legislation, labels, safety, risk, IPM methods, record keeping and environmental concerns are included in reasonable detail. However critical features are omitted entirely or are covered only superficially. In particular:

- There is no mention of the need or methods to obtain accurate weather forecasts
- Dilution techniques and pitfalls are not emphasized enough

- No time is allotted to practice calculations on sprayer calibration and application amounts
- The new legislation on buffer zones and headlands is not included
- Interaction between instructor and students is minimal so specific needs are not addressed
- Slide presentation materials are not available in hand-out form for study purposes

Of equal concern is the format of the examination. The examination is held directly after the oral presentations of the day, without pause for study or contemplation. The exam is open-book with about eighty questions of multiple choice form. Numerous questions rely on the contents of a 200 page manual not seen until the day of the course. Many questions rely on precise recollection of the oral presentations of the day, with little hope of recall unless careful and elaborate notes are taken. Overall, the examination is unfair for the audience of students who have not studied for some years and who need help to digest the content.

In recommendation #44, the Round Table on Resource Land Use recommended that the Pesticide Certification Course be extended beyond the one-day format. We concur. In particular we recommend that the instruction be extended to a full day with the incorporation of the items identified above and that the examination be held at a later date after the students have had appropriate time for study.

Action Committee on Agricultural Runoff Control

In the summer of 1999, there were significant fish kills in Island rivers. Investigation of these incidents indicated that in many cases, these fish kills were a result of pesticides being carried with sediment-laden runoff from agricultural lands. Late in the summer of 1999, the Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry and Technology and Environment struck a committee to investigate strategies which could prevent further fish kills resulting from agricultural runoff. This "Action Committee on Agricultural Runoff" tabled a report on its findings in October of 1999. The report contained a series of 22 recommendations, calling for action by a number of federal and provincial departments and agencies, as well as potato producers and the agrochemical industry.

The Minister of Technology and Environment tasked the Environmental Advisory Council with conducting an independent assessment of the response of government and industry to these recommendations. The Environmental Advisory Council consulted with government and industry on progress on these issues, and ranked the progress on each recommendation.

Council was generally pleased to find that significant progress, or complete fulfillment of almost three quarters of the recommendations had been made. Some areas of particular progress included measures to inform producers on the linkage between soil erosion and fishkills, identification of high risk lands, adoption of buffer zones along watercourses and implementation of pesticide risk reduction strategies. There were some areas where little progress was reported, and Council was less impressed with action by the agrochemical industry and federal regulatory agencies on developing new research priorities for lower risk products, on changes to tax status, and dialogue between producers and environmental non-government organizations. The Environmental Advisory Council's report is reproduced below:

An Assessment of the Progress by Government and Industry in Response to the Report of the Action Committee on Agricultural Runoff Control

The Environmental Advisory Council was asked by the Minister of Technology and Environment to complete an independent assessment of the response of government and industry to the recommendations of the Action Committee on Agricultural Runoff Control. Council has completed its assessment of the responses to the recommendations and has prepared this report in an objective manner with the intent being to fairly judge the responses as related to what Council feels were the intent of the recommendations.

The assessments of the responses are based solely on our consultations with government departments (federal and provincial), industry and industry associations. The actual scores assigned to the responses are based on the information provided to us by the various departments and others. The Environmental Advisory Council wishes to thank all departments and agencies for taking the time and effort to respond in considerable detail to our request for information. Most of these responses were received in a timely manner; however tardy responses from some have delayed the completion of this report which was due on May 1, 2000.

Council has assigned a score (ranking) for the response to the intent of each recommendation on a scale of 0 to 3. Zero (0) represents virtually no response; one (1) would indicate a minimal response; two (2) would indicate that significant progress has been made; and three (3) would indicate that in Council's opinion the response has fully satisfied the intent of the recommendations. The recommendations, Council's ranking and some explanatory notes on the assigned score follow.

Recommendation #1

Federal and Provincial governments should strictly enforce the regulations of the *Environmental Protection Act*, the *Pesticides Control Act*, and the *Fisheries Act*.

Score: 2

Council recognizes that all levels and departments of government have increased their enforcement activities. However, Council wonders if there may be a shortfall in the area of cooperation between the various provincial and federal departments with regard to coordination and implementation of enforcement efforts. Despite the fact that there were eight documented fish kills related to agricultural runoff, only two resulted in prosecutions.

Recommendation #2

All potato growers should be encouraged to implement in the fall of 1999 the amendment to the *Environmental Protection Act* requiring 10-metre buffer zones and the 50-metre conservation zone so that these zones will be in place for winter 1999-00 and the cropping season in the year 2000.

The legislation pertaining to the date that the 50-metre conservation zone is scheduled to come into effect should be changed from April, 2001 to August, 2000 after appropriate consultation with the industry.

Score: 3

Council is pleased to note that recommendation #2 has been fully implemented and government has been particularly diligent in meeting with and providing information to potato growers.

Recommendation #3

The provincial government should amend the *Property Tax Act* so that farm land owned by non-bona fide farmers would be taxed at the farm rate if the owners or users have completed an Environmental Farm Plan and implemented the Action Plan on that property.

Score: 1

Government has indeed made amendments to the *Property Tax Act* which has done two things.

Previously, in order to be classified as a bona fide farmer the property owner was required to earn 50% of his/her income from the farm operation; this has been reduced to 25% which will result in decreased taxes for at least some entry level farmers. In addition, an amendment was included which will result in a reduced tax rate for non-bona fide farmers who lease their land to bona fide farmers for agricultural purposes. This reduced tax rate will be higher than the tax rate on lands owned by bona fide farmers.

In Council's opinion, Provincial Treasury has misread the major intent of the recommendation which was to offer the farm tax rate to non-farmers where the lessor or the lessee have completed an Environmental Farm Plan with an implemented Action Plan. Council feels that a score of 1 in this case may indeed be generous and would urge government to revisit the *Property Tax Act* immediately to satisfy the intent of this recommendation.

Recommendation #4

The potato industry should adopt a code of practice for soil and water conservation in potato production. Also, as recommended by the Round Table, the code should include a **minimum three year crop rotation** as the industry standard. It is recommended that the Farm Practices Review Board be asked to designate the code as recommended above as a code of practice under the Farm Practices Act.

Score: 2

The potato industry has been unable to achieve the primary objective - the adoption of a code of practice for soil and water conservation - but has indeed accomplished a lot in a relatively short period of time. The industry, in cooperation with government, has developed a document titled "Best Management Practices (BMP) for Soil and Water Conservation in Potato Production." This document was approved by potato producers and has been used as an educational tool for potato producers. The intent is to continue to educate farmers on the values and need for the implementation of the BMP philosophy on all potato farms. The code, which would be a specification of acceptable but less rigorous practices, has not been developed and hence not passed on to the Farm Practices Review Board.

Council has decided that the response of industry and government has started the industry well down a road which will satisfy the intent of Recommendation #4.

Recommendation #5

Every potato farm on Prince Edward Island should complete an Environmental Farm Plan and implement the Action Plan. Properties with excessively long and steep slopes have to be identified in the Action Plan along with the time frame in which remedial measures will be taken. Priority for funding under AERC will be given to these properties.

Score: 2

Council is of the opinion that the primary objective of having all potato farmers complete an Environmental Farm Plan by April 1, 2000 was logistically an impossibility. Government has moved forward on this recommendation in a timely manner in making the Environmental Farm Plan initiative available, in identifying fields at high risk for soil erosion and in providing financial incentives through the AERC program. In actual fact, by April 1 approximately half of all potato operations had completed Environmental Farm Plans. The process must be continued with vigorous promotion.

Recommendation #6

The potato industry, with support from the provincial government, should implement a pesticide risk reduction strategy based on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles.

Score: 3

Council is impressed with the response of both government and industry in working to meet the intent of this recommendation. The Potato Producers' Association is to be particularly commended for its proactive approach to proper management of potato farms. The work of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry Integrated Pest Management specialist is finding excellent response in the farming community.

Recommendation #7

Sufficient funding should be provided in the Agriculture and Environmental Resource Conservation (AERC) Program so that potato growers will have access to the matching funding needed to implement soil conservation practices.

Score: 3

Government has responded very positively to this recommendation. It established the AERC program and made additional funds available when the uptake by farmers was strong. Furthermore, this program reinforced the Environmental Farm Plans initiative as only those farms with a completed Environmental Farm Plan qualify for assistance.

Recommendation #8

The Department of Transportation and Public Works (TPW), in cooperation with watershed improvement groups, potato growers, land owners and provincial personnel, should identify locations where agricultural land runoff waters have the potential to impact watercourses via their discharge into and through TPW roadway ditches, tap drains, etc. As well, TPW, in cooperation with these persons/groups should identify ways to manage such flows to minimize impact on watercourses.

Score: 3

Council was impressed with the efforts of the Department of Transportation and Public Works in responding to this recommendation in a very timely manner. Through interdepartmental cooperation, the sites have been identified and plans are being generated to deal with the problem sites. However, funding is not yet in place. It should also be noted that local watershed improvement organizations have played an important role in identifying problems and recommending remedial measures.

Recommendation #9

Further research should be carried out across the whole spectrum of pest management in potato production from various levels of organic specifications and various levels of IPM, up to and including genetically-modified varieties. Controlled studies should be carried out to provide reliable data on production costs, yields, and soil quality. Studies on the economics of soil conservation and the effects of pesticide mixtures should also be done. This research should be carried out jointly, by industry and government, with expertise provided by both levels of government.

Score: 2

Traditionally the responsibility for major research initiatives has been vested with industry, as part of the pesticide registration process, and the federal government as research costs are quite often beyond the financial capabilities of provinces. This is still the case and Council feels that

this is where the responsibility must rest. Information provided to Council indicates that considerable efforts are being expended in all aspects of pest management in potato production. There is however, little evidence that this particular recommendation has resulted in increased emphasis on research. The public furore over genetically modified potatoes is a complicating factor with this recommendation as major potato processors have indicated that they will not purchase this product. Council feels that more research and testing is required to determine if genetically modified potatoes are indeed safe from an environmental and health perspective.

The province has demonstrated an increased commitment to education and demonstrations regarding alternative growing methodologies such as organic farming and integrated pest management practices.

Recommendation #10

The Department of Agriculture and Forestry should allocate resources to programs and services in support of the organic and low-input food sector.

Score: 2

There has been considerable resources allocated by the department to support the organic and low-impact food sector; however, Council is of the opinion that these efforts must be increased and continued, particularly with regard to demonstrations and educational programs for farmers.

There is an obvious interest from a significant number of consumers to obtain certified organically grown food products and government should ensure that PEI farmers have an opportunity to serve this market.

Recommendation #11

The Crop Protection Institute and its members should accelerate research into the development of new crop protection products which have reduced impact on aquatic life.

Score: 1

There is little doubt that CPIC members (primarily Agri-chemical firms) do extensive research on pesticides to determine efficacy, residual impacts, etc. to satisfy the registration process. Having said this, research is ongoing and undoubtedly includes products which may have a reduced impact on aquatic life but there is no indication that these companies have or intend to

accelerate research as a result of this recommendation. CPIC as an organization does not conduct research but should be more proactive in encouraging member companies to do so.

Recommendation #12

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency should continue and put a higher priority on the registration of crop protectants with lower toxicity and more specificity.

Score: 1

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency has shown little indication that they intend to place the registration of lower toxicity products on a higher priority. They will continue to assess registration candidates more on the basis of need, and as requested by industry to address immediate problems. Government should use whatever means that are at their disposal, including vigorous lobby efforts, to convince the Pest Management Regulatory Agency to modify their registration priority policies.

Recommendation #13

Considering the importance of weather information, Environment Canada should continue to provide specialized agricultural weather forecasts and improve their accuracy with respect to the potential for localized heavy rainfall.

Score: 2

Environment Canada does provide specialized weather forecasts for a fee and is quite willing to provide this service providing someone pays to install a weather monitoring station to feed into their forecasting system. This increased accuracy of forecasting will than be sold to those subscribers who are willing to pay a fee. This policy has not changed and therefore it appears that Environment Canada's response to this recommendation is minimal at best. The PEI Department of Agriculture and Forestry, on the other hand, has responded to this recommendation through funding an additional weather station and assistance to farmers who choose to subscribe to this weather service. This financial support is commendable. The improvement of the data collection system and the financial support for those using the information are the reasons for the score of 2.

Recommendation #14

Potato growers should be made aware of the details of the recent fish kills, the causes, and explain how soil erosion could have been avoided in those fields.

Score: 3

Council believes that the Potato Producers' Association and the Departments of Agriculture and Forestry and Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment have responded fully to this recommendation. Public meetings were well attended and detailed information was suitably provided.

Recommendation #15

The potato growers as well as the land owners from whose land suspect eroded soil carrying pesticides caused the fish kills should be contacted by Soil and Water Conservation staff to explain the problem to them and offer advice and assistance to avoid such occurrences in the future.

Score: 3

Soil and water conservation staff of the PEI Department of Agriculture and Forestry did meet with all producers and landowners, and have developed site specific recommendations on soil management and agricultural practices which should minimize such events.

Recommendation #16

There should be initiation and continuing communication between the potato industry and environmental organizations such as Prince Edward Island Wildlife Federation, Environmental Coalition of Prince Edward Island, Island Nature Trust, and the Prince Edward Island Atlantic Salmon Federation Regional Council.

Score: 1

The Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment organized a meeting with some of the environmental groups to establish a framework to ensure that potato growers and environmental groups could work together on an ongoing basis. Unfortunately the environmental groups felt that there was little to be gained by liaising with potato producers and the initiative was abandoned. Council would urge government to revisit this recommendation in an effort to achieve at least a

minimal level of cooperation. Exposure to the viewpoints of others and to the necessities of agricultural production can only be beneficial to all.

Recommendation #17

A pesticide toxicity ranking assessment should be carried out with all commonly used pesticides to identify their relative risk to aquatic life and the resulting information communicated to producers during the normal January-March 2000 potato producer meetings and subsequently used by producers.

Score: 3

Council is pleased that the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment completed this assessment and communicated the results to producers in a timely manner. A very readable document including a color-coded scale of toxicity rankings was created and widely circulated.

Recommendation #18

The Potato Producers' Association, cooperatively with federal and provincial agencies, should hold workshops on soil conservation methodologies, pesticide toxicities, etc. on a watershed basis across the province.

Score: 2

There have indeed been workshops on these issues and the workshops included appropriate government agencies and departments. The score was limited to 2 as there appears to have been insufficient effort to conduct such meetings on a watershed basis. However, Council is not convinced that conducting such workshops on a watershed basis is indeed the most feasible or best approach.

Recommendation #19

High risk watersheds should be identified and the information used to complete Environmental Farm Plans and in counseling farm operators regarding soil conservation practices required to prevent soil erosion and runoff.

Score: 3

Council is impressed with the quality and quantity of information that has been collected by the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and made available to producers at workshops and through such venues as producer meetings and field days. The Geographic Information System has been especially helpful in providing detailed information in a timely manner.

Recommendation #20

Awareness/education programs for farm workers should incorporate information on soil tillage and pesticide application practices that conserve soil and protect water resources respectively.

Score: 3

The Department of Agriculture and Forestry and producer organizations have demonstrated a clear commitment to the inclusion of such information in courses designed for farm workers as well as through media releases. Attendance by farm workers has been excellent. This effort must continue.

Recommendation #21
Land owners who rent land for row crop production, particularly for potatoes, should be informed about their responsibility for soil conservation and be provided with updated (to be reviewed by Potato Producers' Association, PEI Federation of Agriculture and PEI Soil and Crop Improvement Association) copies of "Model Farm Leases" prepared initially by the PEI Soil and Crop Improvement Association together with the Farm Business Management staff of the PEI Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

Score: 1

There has been some progress made in this area but efforts to date do not appear to have a sufficient sense of urgency to ensure that all lessors will be properly advised. Council would urge government to move forward on this recommendation as it is the opinion of Council that many lessors are unaware of what is actually happening on their land.

Recommendation #22
Farmers should be encouraged to actively participate in existing Island Watershed Conservation Groups.

Score: 2

Council is encouraged to note that the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment have initiated discussions with watershed and industry groups with a view to fostering cooperation between the farmers and watershed groups. Special efforts have been made to encourage farmer participation and a manual for the establishment of watershed groups has been developed. Continuing efforts are required by government to foster these relationships.

Summary

The Environmental Advisory Council was pleased to be tasked with producing what in effect is a report card of how well the various government departments, industry and industry groups have responded to the recommendations of the Action Committee. This assignment, while time-consuming and not without effort, has been very rewarding work for Council and we sincerely hope that it will serve as a reminder that considerable work remains to be done.

Council was very impressed with the level of effort expended by most departments of the PEI government, where there has been a very real and concerted effort to respond to the recommendations. Those departments that have, in the opinion of Council, major work remaining need only consult this report for the score on each recommendation.

The response of industry and industry groups was also very encouraging. The level of commitment, recognition of the problems and work done to date certainly give us hope that agriculture may be on course to a sustainable future from both a production and an environmental perspective.

The response of the federal government departments and agencies was less encouraging. Perhaps we should not have high expectations that the federal players can respond to the concerns on what is in reality a small corner of the collective mandates for which they are responsible. Nevertheless we must assess the responses solely on how the various departments responded to the actual recommendation.

Council was pleased in most cases with the timelines and completeness of the responses forwarded to us. In this regard the federal departments and agencies responded in the most timely fashion, and with excellent descriptions of their activities.

Special thanks to all who worked so diligently to respond to Council's requests for information and clarification. Council would urge all levels of government and industry to continue to pursue excellence with regard to agricultural practices on PEI. Council sincerely hopes that the fish kill

crisis which precipitated the Action Committee report will be hailed as the beginning of a better, more environmentally aware, future for all.

Dr. Leon Loucks
Chairman, Environmental Advisory Council

Round Table on Resource Land Use and Sustainability: An Assessment of Progress

Since the Round Table on Resource Land Use and Stewardship tabled its report, the Environmental Advisory Council has devoted considerable energy to tracking progress of government in implementing recommendations made by this body. This work has involved considerable correspondence with departments and agencies deemed responsible for addressing particular recommendations of the Round Table, and an assessment of the extent to which recommendations have been acted on.

In 1999, Council conducted a major review of progress to date, and in 2000, only a few outstanding areas of this assessment remained to be addressed. During 2000, correspondence and meetings continued between the Council and various departments in an effort to complete this evaluation. This work was essentially completed by June of 2000, and findings included in Council's 1999 Annual Report.

Other Issues

During the course of Council's deliberations, a diverse range of environmental issues are raised and discussed. These issues range from those of very local interest to broader issues of global importance. A brief description of some of the more important issues is presented below.

- **Heritage roads**

  For some time, concerns have been expressed about the impact of soil erosion and stream sedimentation as a result of road maintenance practices on heritage roads. The issue was brought to Council's attention through the efforts of the Trout River Environmental Committee. Part of the problem stems from the competing goals of maintaining these roads in an historically accurate fashion, while at the same time taking advantage of modern road construction and maintenance practices to mitigate the effects of erosion.

It was noted that this issue involves both the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment and the Department of Transportation and Public Works. In an effort to find a resolution to these problems, discussion and correspondence was initiated between Council and these departments. As part of this action, Minister Gillan made a commitment to arrange a meeting between these two departments and the Trout River Environmental Committee, and to find a solution to the problem within the next six months.

- **Secondary sewage treatment - funding**

In 1999, Council noted concern over the efficacy of wastewater treatment technology employed by the province's larger municipal wastewater systems. Most municipalities employ secondary treatment technology but Charlottetown and Summerside only have primary wastewater treatment. These concerns were presented to the cities of Charlottetown and Summerside and in each case they responded to Council, acknowledging these concerns, although no timetable for action on this issue was noted. During 2000, Council continued to follow this issue.

Letters were sent to Provincial Environment Minister Mitch Murphy, Federal Environment Minister David Anderson, Federal Minister of Fisheries Herb Dhaliwal and Prime Minister Jean Chretien, urging for consideration in assisting coastal communities in establishing secondary treatment. Replies received from Ministers Anderson and Dhaliwal acknowledged Council's concerns and outlined the various federal responsibilities in this area and existing or potential funding initiatives which may be of some assistance. At year end, Council requested an update from Charlottetown and Summerside on their plans regarding secondary sewage treatment.

- **Global warming, alternative energy**

Council has followed developments relating to global warming/climate change, in particular relating to Canada's response to the commitments to the Kyoto Summit, and to role/steps the province can or could take. The Chair of Council met with staff of the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment and was briefed on federal - provincial progress on this issue. In general, Council is disappointed with the lack of progress and leadership shown by the federal government in addressing these issues.

On a more positive note, Council heard an excellent presentation on the status of wind energy in Canada and abroad, with particular emphasis on developments at the Atlantic Wind Test Site in North Cape. Council also wrote to Minister Murphy, encouraging the

province to promote the development of alternate energy sources. It was suggested that participation in pilot programs and the purchase of "green" energy by the province would be worthy of consideration. Mr. Murphy responded in a positive manner to Council's approach, but referred Council to the Department of Development's Energy and Minerals Section, as this area falls more closely within their mandate and expertise.

- **Buffer zone legislation**

  Among the issues Council has followed is the progress the province has made on buffer zones. Early in the year, Council was updated on proposed amendments to the *Environmental Protection Act*, including improvements to definitions with respect to this legislation, and provisions to include areas around wetlands in buffer zones. Through the course of the year, there was frequent discussion about buffer zones, particularly in relation to their effectiveness in dealing with fish kill issues. While Council generally concurs with the importance of buffer zones, it also feels that they are only one of the necessary steps in protecting watercourses from land-based influences.

- ***Forest Management Act***

  Over the past two years, the Environmental Advisory Council has expressed its disappointment in government's lack of action on managing forest harvesting levels and in the development of a Forestry Code of Practice. This year, Council continued to follow this issue, particularly the progress of Bill 7, an Amendment to the *Forest Management Act*, which would require contractors to sign an intent to harvest declaration. Unfortunately, while the amendment was approved it was not proclaimed. Council did note the intention to establish a Forest Improvement Advisory Council, modeled after the Environmental Advisory Council, and has expressed an interest in discussing issues of mutual interest with this body.

2000 Science Fair Winners

Over the years, the Environmental Advisory Council has taken an active interest in the annual Provincial Science Fair sponsored by the University of Prince Edward Island. Involvement has included the judging and awarding of prizes to participants whose projects demonstrate good understanding or innovative approaches to environmental issues. In the year 2000, prizes were awarded to entries in the junior and intermediate categories only, as projects at the senior level did not meet the criteria deemed appropriate by Council judges. Prize money of $50, $30 and $20 was awarded to first, second and third place winners respectively.

Environmental Award Winners

Since its inception in 1987, the Environmental Advisory Council has recognized citizens for their special commitment to the environment through the PEI Environmental Awards. Nominations are sought each year for the categories of: individual citizen, business or government agency, citizen group or organization, education, and youth. In 2000, a total of 19 nominations were received. Awards were presented at the June meeting of Council to:

- Individual Citizen - Daryl Guignion
- Business or Government Agency- Maritime Electric
- Citizen Group or Organization - Southeast Environmental Association
- Education - Esther McQuaid
- Youth - Grand Tracadie Elementary School

Appendix A
Environmental Advisory Council
2000 Membership

Dr. Leon Loucks, Chairman
Charlottetown
(resigned chair in September)

Mr. Lorne MacNeill, Vice-Chair
West Cape
(finished term as vice-chair in September)

Mr. Kevin MacAdam
Morell

Mr. Bruce Gillespie
Indian River
(finished term in October)

Mr. Calvin Fraser
Murray Harbour
(finished term in June)

Dr. Donna Giberson
Charlottetown
(assumed chair in September)

Rudy Croken
Kensington

Ms. Carol Gallant
Federation of PEI Municipalities
(finished in December 2000)

Dr. Pierre-Yves Daoust
Atlantic Veterinary College

Barry Cudmore
Brackley
(appointed in June; assumed vice-chair in September)

Peggy Coffin
Federation of PEI Municipalities

Emmerson McMillan
Ascension
(appointed in April)

Terry Perry
Millview
(appointed in April)

Riki Lee Sulis
Vernon Bridge
(appointed in August)